AL.1.1798
c.2

RE:SOURCE

The Newsletter of the Municipal Excellence Network

MARCH
2003

A Network newsletter, news for networking

The Municipal Excellence Network is a collaborative partnership between Alberta municipalities and Alberta Municipal Affairs. It provides tools and resources that local governments can use in their pursuit of continuous improvement and it recognizes local government excellence. The key driver is information and knowledge sharing among municipalities.

Re:source is the Network newsletter; this first issue introduces the Municipal Excellence Network to those who have not yet experienced it and provides an update for those who have. Upcoming issues will focus on the people who make up the Network and the excellent work they do in service of Alberta municipalities. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues. Please contact us at the address listed.

In This Issue

Network Newsletter

Municipal Practices

Municipally Excellent Folks

Municipal Excellence in Action

What's Next

Have Coffee With Us

Practice, practice, practice

During the initial development phase for the Municipal Excellence Network, representatives from Alberta municipalities and their associations met with people from Alberta Municipal Affairs to determine what "tool set" would best help local governments. All agreed that one vital tool would be a collection of practices drawn from the experience of elected officials, administrators and municipal practitioners across the province.

So at the direction of municipal representatives, the Municipal Excellence team set out to collect these practices and build a "library" in which they could be stored and easily accessed by everyone. The result is the MEnet Web site, which opened June 24, 2002.

Located at www.menet.ab.ca, the site contains information about resources such as educational courses, books, articles and other reference materials. It has tools, templates and checklists to help simplify and organize workloads. Also, it carries the latest news on workshops and conferences for those working in local government.

> The Municipal Excellence team set out to collect these practices and build a "library"in which they could be stored and easily accessed by everyone.

Municipal Excellence network

Municipalities **sharing knowledge** *to excel*

WWW.MENET.AB.CA

Alberta MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

Practice continued

But most important, it holds a searchable collection of practices, now at 133 entries with 50 more to come in April 2003. These relate to the core business processes of municipal governance and administration: planning, communicating, organizing, implementing and managing performance. They have been submitted from all corners of the province and all sizes of municipality: cities like Calgary, Spruce Grove, Lethbridge and Grande Prairie; towns like Coaldale and Fox Creek; counties such as Minburn and Cypress; municipal districts like Taber and Big Lakes; villages such as Chauvin and Cremona.

They cover muncipal matters like evaluating a chief administrative officer, mentoring programs, private/public utility partnerships, intermunicipal cost-sharing agreements and records retention policies. You can search for these practices on the Web site through three avenues: by the authoring municipality; by the business process they are part of; or by the practice category they fall under. And when you open up a practice, you will find information on every aspect of how that practice was developed, consulted on, approved, implemented and evaluated. You can read about the lessons learned and the resources required, look at relevant documentation or contact key people for further information.

A final note about practices – we are still looking for more, so do not hesitate to share something that has worked for you. If you think you don't have anything worthwhile to offer, consider that some of the most popular practices are practical tips like simplified council agendas. Sign into the Web site, follow the instructions and make your contribution to the Network. If you have nothing to submit, check out the Web site anyway – you will probably find something you can use. It will cost you nothing except some well-invested time!

"Municipally excellent folks"

The Municipal Excellence Network is first and foremost about knowledge. And knowledge comes from people; they are the foundation of the Network. So this space is devoted to the people who breathe life into the Municipal Excellence Network. In this issue we start with one of our key builders; in future issues you will meet more folks who contribute to or use this tremendous local government resource.

Meet Sharon Butler; the administrator for the Village of Forestburg. She has done this job for the past four years, having spent the 14 years before that as assistant to the administrator. Sharon comes from small-town Alberta, but also spent a number of years in Toronto, so she has seen many aspects of Canadian life – big and small, rural and urban, east and west.

Sharon has a wealth of experience and a style that makes her both a natural networker and a great "Net-worker." She was one of the 40 or so original stakeholder representatives who helped decide that easily accessible knowledge in the form of established practices would be a valuable asset for people working in municipal government. They saw the need for information on "the basic stuff that is an important part of the job, especially for new administrators." Sharon believes in leaving a knowledge legacy for the next CAO in her municipality and future generations of municipal administrators.

Meet Sharon Butler, the administrator for the Village of Forestburg.

Sharon said she was really impressed that stakeholders like herself were able to provide direction that was heard and acted upon. She is a big believer in the Network. She says, "I don't have to phone Municipal Affairs anymore when I have a question. I

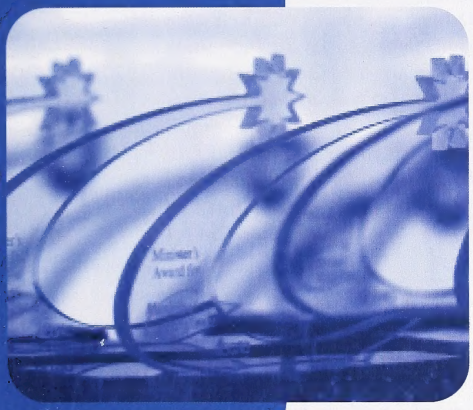
Municipally excellent folks continued

can post it on the Q&A bulletin board on the Web site and get an answer without having to feel silly!"

Sharon knows she has colleagues across the province facing many of the same challenges she does and she's not afraid to ask for their help. Instead of being limited to phoning people she knows, she can access the expertise of hundreds of people she doesn't know because their contact information is included with the knowledge they have shared.

Sharon and the Village of Forestburg have made their own contribution to the Network. They submitted their practice of publishing a monthly newsletter for roughly 500 area households to keep constituents informed about their local government's activities. If you want to know more about the Forestburg newsletter, go to www.menet.ab.ca and use the search functions. Then you can give Sharon a call and talk to her in person – we promise you will enjoy the experience!

Municipal excellence in action



In addition to knowledge sharing, another objective of the Municipal Excellence Network is to recognize excellence in Alberta local government. To this end, Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister Guy Boutilier created the Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence, which he presented for the first time at the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties conventions in September 2002. The awards honour leading practices by Alberta municipalities that demonstrate innovation, partnership and outstanding achievement.

The Innovation Award for 2002 went to the Town of Canmore's Community Art Programme, which not only supports local artists, but in doing so acquires a body of public art for the beautification of Canmore's public places and appreciation by its citizens and visitors. The Community Art Programme demonstrated a vision in the town's commitment to a broader municipal perspective, rather than focusing simply on essential services. A true reflection of community values, this vision has improved quality of life for local citizens and impacted visitors to the town as well.

The Partnership Award went to the Sunflower Community Resource Program. The towns of Gibbons, Bon Accord, Legal, Morinville and Redwater; Sturgeon County, Sturgeon School Division and the Child and Family Services Authorities for Sakaw-Askiy (Region 11) and Sakaigun Asky (Region 12) are all members of this partnership. They evaluated the resources available within their communities and recognized the need for a "one-stop" information and resource centre, understanding that having every resource in every community was neither cost effective nor successful.

The Outstanding Achievement Award went to Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, a collaborative effort between Strathcona County, Sturgeon County, Lamont County and the City of Fort Saskatchewan. This partnership supports economic development, municipal land use planning, emergency services, and utility and transportation infrastructure. By pooling resources, the partnership can promote and

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2017 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

https://archive.org/details/resourcenewslett2003albe

attract much more investment for the region than each municipality could on its own. You can learn more about these and other leading practices at www.menet.ab.ca.

The 2003 awards are fast approaching, so you may want to consider a submission for your municipality or nominating another municipality you know that's doing excellent work. As you recommended in the 2002 Awards evaluation, we'll be keeping the same submission form as last year. We'll also be mailing an Awards factsheet and submission form to every Alberta municipality. Remember, it's not a complicated process; every municipality – large, small, urban, rural – is eligible, and you will have seven full weeks to complete your submission from the time your receive your package. To learn more, check out the Web site or call the Municipal Excellence team.

What's next?

Phase 2 of the Municipal Excellence Network is now underway. The Municipal Excellence team is once again talking to stakeholders from municipalities. In January, February and March of 2003 the team held stakeholder consultations to: identify criteria for leading practices; make sure the practice collection form is relevant and test Web site improvements for the financial management and human resources modules; collect practices; test a self-assessment tool and solicit advice on non-electronic methods of knowledge sharing.

Also, we will continue to improve the Web site, making it more accessible and easier to navigate for you, the users. Some enhancements will include a new spell check, a simpler advanced search tool, and audio and video capacity so municipalities can load marketing examples. This will involve more design work and user acceptance testing. And to help you make the most of all the knowledge and material going into the Network, we are developing training materials that will support your commitment to continuous improvement.

Have coffee with us and start your awards submission early!

Take your next coffee break with the Municipal Excellence Network. Fill out the "Practice Collection Form" online (check in to www.menet.ab.ca), press submit practice, and we'll send you a snazzy coffee mug to perk up your desk and your coffee. Invite the Municipal Excellence staff to your next association or zone meeting and we'll even have coffee with you. Last but not least, if you submit a practice now you've completed more than half of a submission for the 2003 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence.

Re:source is published by the Municipal Excellence Network and Alberta Municipal Affairs.
Please forward your comments to:

Victoria Brown
Phone: (780) 422-8342
victoria.brown@gov.ab.ca

Michael Stansberry
Phone: (780) 422-8908
michael.stansberry@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Municipal Affairs
17th Floor, Commerce Place
10155-102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4

Library and Archives Canada
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada
3 3286 53326664 5